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ADJUSTMENT TO RECRUIT TRAINING

Betty S. Anderson

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# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

## Monterey, California



# THESIS

ADJUSTMENT TO RECRUIT TRAINING

by

Betty S. Anderson

December 1974

Thesis Advisor:

R. S. Elster

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1164064



REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE		READ INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE COMPLETING FORM
1. REPORT NUMBER	2. GOVT ACCESSION NO.	3. RECIPIENT'S CATALOG NUMBER
4. TITLE (and Subtitle) Adjustment to Recruit Training		5. TYPE OF REPORT & PERIOD COVERED Master's thesis; December 1974
		6. PERFORMING ORG. REPORT NUMBER
7. AUTHOR(s) Betty S. Anderson		8. CONTRACT OR GRANT NUMBER(s)
9. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, California 93940		10. PROGRAM ELEMENT, PROJECT, TASK AREA & WORK UNIT NUMBERS
11. CONTROLLING OFFICE NAME AND ADDRESS Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, California 93940		12. REPORT DATE December 1974
		13. NUMBER OF PAGES 67
14. MONITORING AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS (if different from Controlling Office) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, California 93940		15. SECURITY CLASS. (of this report) Unclassified
		15a. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE
16. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of this Report) Approved for public release; distribution unlimited.		
17. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of the abstract entered in Block 20, if different from Report)		
18. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES		
19. KEY WORDS (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) Recruit training Adjustment		
20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) This thesis examines problems of adjustment encountered by new recruits entering the military services. Factors affecting adjustment such as the recruit training staff and environment, recruit background characteristics, the military's image, the changing values and motivations of today's youth, and the recruiting process are discussed. Sources of tension/stress and dysfunctional reactions to recruit training are examined; and (cont.)		



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ADJUSTMENT TO RECRUIT TRAINING

by

Betty S. Anderson  
Lieutenant, United States Navy  
B.S., University of Southern Mississippi, 1963

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN MANAGEMENT

from the

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL  
December 1974

Thesis  
Aug 47  
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## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines problems of adjustment encountered by new recruits entering the military services. Factors affecting adjustments such as the recruit training staff and environment, recruit background characteristics, the military's image, the changing values and motivations of today's youth, and the recruiting process are discussed. Sources of tension/stress and dysfunctional reactions to recruit training are examined; and finally, recommendations are made for alleviating some of the adjustment problems.



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## I. INTRODUCTION

Today with pressures to reduce defense spending, the large percentage of the defense budget devoted to personnel costs, and the steady and projected reduction of overall force levels, the greatest challenge facing the military services is the effective utilization of its most precious resource-people. More so than ever before, defense management is concerned with people vice hardware. The effective use of manpower has been and continues to be as elusive as it is important.

The military services turn over approximately 60 percent of its total personnel every two years [Cameron, 1971]. Not only does this high turnover reduce readiness, but it is extremely costly in terms of recruiting and training. Billions of dollars are spent annually to train new men and women, and the military can ill afford the manpower losses caused by the failure or inability of large numbers of servicemen and women to accept and perform in their military roles. Because of this cost and the increasing need for well-trained personnel, the value of a sound, thorough and efficient recruit training program cannot be overly emphasized.

If the military establishment is to attract and retain personnel and accomplish its mission, it must concern itself with the human side of the organization, i.e., the needs of the individual as well as the needs of the organization. It must also be aware of the changes in society at large, and



adjust itself accordingly. As society changes, so must the organization. Too few members of the military services understand or attempt to understand the changing values and needs of the youth of today, and the difficulty of their adjustment from civilian to military life. Men and women, new to the military, must be able to satisfy their needs and accomplish their goals with a reasonable amount of comfort. According to Army Secretary H. H. Callaway, the new recruit has become enormously expensive, hard to get, and available only if he can be convinced that service in the military is worthwhile [U. S. News and World Report, 2 Sep 1974].

With this in mind, this thesis will examine personal adjustment to a military environment, specifically recruit training. This is an area in which recruit training is designed to have its most profound effect and in which there exists a paucity of research. It will discuss problems encountered by persons attempting to adjust from civilian to military life at the recruit training level, and recommend means of alleviating some of these problems.



## II. PRE-RECRUIT TRAINING FACTORS AFFECTING ADJUSTMENT

### A. THE MILITARY'S IMAGE

The factors which most directly affect the attitudes of today's enlistees and society-as-a-whole toward the military are provided by the home, community, school, and national situations. During the past twenty years there have been many changes in the military's image.

In 1955, a national survey revealed that adults ranked military officers seventh in esteem among the various professions, and that teenagers ranked military careers fifth [Janowitz, 1960]. In the late 1950's, Janowitz [1959] expressed society's opinion of the military when he stated, "In a society in which individualism and personal gain are paramount virtues, it is understandable that wide sectors of the civilian population view the military career as a weak choice, as an effort to "sell out" cheaply for economic security and low pay and limited prestige, [p. 47]."

In the late sixties and early seventies, the military's image seemed to have hit its all time low as illustrated by the following comments. General Ridgeway wrote in 1969 that he had never seen the military's image so low or public respect for its members so lacking [Jefferies, 1971]; and Stewart Alsop wrote in 1970 that "there has never been a time when a uniform carried with it less prestige [Jefferies, 1971, p. 116]." One public opinion poll taken during this period rated military leaders below garbage collectors [Navy Times, 1974].





With the end of the Vietnam conflict, the military's image improved considerably. According to a public opinion survey conducted by the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan in 1974, the U. S. Military was the most admired institution in the nation [Navy Times, 1974].

The low public opinion of the military, particularly in the sixties, was in part a result of the changing social values, motivations and life-styles of young America.

Although the widespread hostility toward the military services has lessened since the end of the Vietnam conflict and the draft, many individuals and communities of American society still question the "legitimacy of dedicating one's life to military service [Barber, 1972b, p. 309];" and the military profession is still considered by many to be something to be avoided.

The military should be aware of the differences in the young men and women entering the services today, and the influence society-as-a-whole has on the assimilation of military roles by these young people. Harburg [1971] pointed out that these differences demand a different type of training from that which was appropriate for their predecessors.

## B. TODAY'S YOUTH

The military services are basically youthful in age structure; Lang [1964], in a study of military rank structure trends, indicated that more than fifty percent of officer and enlisted personnel fell within the first three and four grades of rank, respectfully, which represent an age range of



approximately seventeen through twenty-five years. The military's awareness of and concern for the changing values and life-styles of youth currently entering the military is evidenced by the recent efforts to "modernize" the Armed Forces.

Harbur [1971] stated that, " . . . there is an increasing awareness on the part of the young that there is more to life than job and salary. Young men of enlistment age are searching for ways to improve the quality of their lives. The assurance of self-value once they are on their jobs is becoming increasingly important to the enlistee . . . and he is less rank conscious than his predecessors [p. 19]."

Sandall [1972] made the following comments about today's youth in an article entitled "The Generation Gap:"

Nourished by a youth free from want, numbed by threat, and educated beyond any similar group in the history of the world, the younger generation can afford and are intellectually equipped to question the underlying values of our society. The values of parents, religion, government, law, morality, free enterprise are now being examined and challenged. They hope to change everything that cannot justify itself in terms of value, meaning, and contribution to life [p. 22].

Without the overwhelming need to work for bed, board, and clothing, youth is free to question and reject, if necessary, the premises of society without the penalties of economic want . . . . The youth of today can afford to prick the balloon of hypocrisy [p. 23].

. . . increased education tends to cause a loss of respect for less well-informed elders. It is no longer enough to believe that experience makes one wiser since the young know it isn't always true [p. 24].

. . . self-fulfillment or self-actualization is . . . the prime motivator for our youth [p. 28].

Janowitz [1960] pointed out that military personnel, in future generations, would not follow orders blindly, but would



demand an explanation from those in command. There is evidence of this in today's military. "Today's youth have an increasing desire to control their own lives and destinies. They no longer accept things without question: authority needs more and more to be coupled with respect and ability [Commander's Digest, 1974, p. 11]."

Crawford [1969], in discussing the attitudes of youth in the seventies and eighties, predicted that "there will be more and more serious questioning of national goals and of the obligations on the individual to subordinate himself to the necessary demands of an hierarchial system; and there will be an increasing view that society and its institutions should be conceived and rebuilt to fit the needs of the individuals [p. 33]."

In an article entitled, "Youth and the U. S. Navy," Reynolds [1973] pointed out that the future of the Navy--its professionalism and mission--is at stake, and that frankness, self-criticism, and searching analysis are the first steps toward shaping the future. He further pointed out that the Navy should make sacrifices and changes, that the instrument of change is youth, and that in America's youth lies the future of the U. S. Navy. Reynold's comments are also applicable to the other military services.

#### C. RECRUIT BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS

Although many years of research have not provided an entirely satisfactory method for personnel selection [Janowitz, 1959], there do seem to be patterns of pre-service behavior or pre-



service histories of recruits that are related to successful adjustment to military life.

A study by Plag and Goffmen [1966] demonstrated the predictive validity of school, community, and family life history data in relation to military adjustment. An individual's adjustment to his community at large and to his educational system in particular constitute the most relevant index of his likelihood to adjust to military life.

Research based on World War II soldiers by Stouffer and others [1949] indicated that a stable home background, a healthy childhood, good work habits in school and association with other boys and girls, including participation in sports, were assets for young civilians who put on a uniform and tried to adjust to military life.

According to Nelson [1971], "It has been chiefly within the domain of biographical data that the Armed Forces have achieved modest success in predicting emotional adjustment to military service . . . . Primary among the life history variables, in importance of relationship to military adjustment, are those biographical data related to preservice schooling . . . [p. 98]."

Glass [1956] made the following comments about preservice schooling.

Scholastic achievement is more than an index of endowed and acquired knowledge, for it is also a valid record of prior adjustment in a disciplined and structured environment. Success in school requires not only intellectual ability but reasonable compliance to authority, some capacity to tolerate frustration, and sufficient maturity to relinquish immediate goals for later or more socially desirable objectives, all of which are similar to requirements for adequate adjustment in a military setting [p. 1585].





A study by Stephen, Carroll, and Brown [1972] concluded:

If we are to make any generalizations about who causes the most disciplinary problems, it would be safer to say they are the high school dropouts rather than the unfairly maligned mental group IV's . . . This information suggests that more effort should be put into finding out which non-graduates are better risks than others. Chances are that this is not a function of the education itself so much as it is of an individual's ability to adapt to his environment and finish what he has started . . . [p. 4].

An individual's civilian employment/work record is also an important indication of his "stick-to-itiveness" and his ability to adjust to military life. If a man's work record indicates that he moved from one job to another and/or his performance was poor/unacceptable, he is less likely to make a successful adjustment to military life. Recruit trainers at the Naval Training Center, Orlando, Florida, indicated that recruits having adjustment difficulties and actively seeking discharge had a history of being school dropouts, a record of menial jobs with no sticking to one job, and seem to have tried the Navy and decided to quit again [Navy Times, 10 October 1973].

Select recruit background characteristics do seem to be predictive of successful adjustment to a military environment and should, therefore, be considered in the selection process at the recruiting level.

#### D. RECRUITING

The procurement of personnel is important to any organization, but to the military services it is even more vital because of the high turnover of personnel.



Recruiting has always been, and remains, the military's primary source of manpower. In the age of the all volunteer force, a recruiter's job is indeed awesome; a recent study by the Brookings Institute showed that the services must sign up one-third of all available males, age 19 - 23, if they are to maintain the current force levels, [Klare, 1974]. With the end of the draft, the recruiting organizations went into high gear; and recruiting was placed high on the priority lists of all the military services. "Quota fulfillment was the order of the day . . . [Vtipil, 1974, p. 26]."

Although many of the services tried to improve recruiter effectiveness by stressing the assignment of highly qualified personnel to recruiting jobs, the end of the draft only increased pressure on recruiters to produce "warm bodies," and exacerbated the age-old problems of "telling it like it is" and of selecting only qualified personnel.

Recruiters can have a negative effect on the adjustment of recruits to the military environment. They can select personnel that are not qualified for military service, and therefore have little chance of making a satisfactory adjustment. Not only have the services been criticized for lowering standards for enlistment [Prina, 1973], but some recruiters have been criticized and even relieved for falsifying records such as mental tests in order to meet quotas [Klare, 1974].

Recruit trainers have accused recruiters of deliberately enlisting substandard personnel, and there seems to be some support for their accusations. At Recruit Training Command,



Orlando, Florida, there are cases on file in which recruits said their recruiter helped them fill out qualification tests; and there is evidence of large variations between basic battery test scores at the recruiting station and the recruit training command. Although trainers indicate they expect and understand some variation, they are suspect because the variation often is large among men who do not get good scores to begin with [Navy Times, 10 October 1973].

Another way in which recruiters can adversely affect recruit adjustment is by overselling their product, or by giving totally inaccurate information about what to expect at recruit training. This stretching or bypassing the truth is illustrated by the comments of an Army recruiter--"Just like car salesmen . . . You don't sell cars by talking about the defects. I couldn't sell an Oldsmobile if I told a guy we had to recall 100,000 last year because of a bad transmission [Barnes, 1972, p. 43]."

The expectations men receive from their recruiters about recruit training are an important component in how well they initially adjust to the military. A study by Broedling and Goldsamt [1971] showed that four in ten recruits believed they would have adjusted more easily if the recruiter had been more accurate in describing recruit training. If a recruiter creates a distorted image of recruit training, the "culture shock" experienced by a recruit will be just that much more severe.



"Deception in the recruiting process does not begin with the hard-pressed neighborhood recruiter struggling to meet his quota. It starts at a much higher level, where policy decisions are made and where advertising themes are developed and approved [Barnes, 1972, p. 46]."

There is some evidence that recruiting in the Armed Forces is improving. This may be due to the improved public opinion of the military and a growing unemployment rate. It may also be that the services are assigning more qualified personnel to recruiting jobs and monitoring their performance more closely; but, hopefully, recruiters are finally realizing that their worst enemy is a dissatisfied customer.





### III. MISSION AND GENERAL ENVIRONMENT OF RTC'S

#### A. MISSION

The purpose or mission of Navy recruit training is

. . . to effect a smooth transition from civilian to Navy life; promote the dignity of the individual, inculcate understanding and appreciation of the fundamental workings of democracy and of the Navy's place in democracy; develop a desire for self-improvement and advancement; promote high standards of responsibility, conduct, manners, and morals; provide sufficient knowledge in naval subjects to enable the recruit to be of early usefulness to the service; develop observance of naval customs and traditions; and stress pride in self and in the Navy [NAVPERS 10848-E, 1971, p. 243].

Similarly, the purpose of Army basic training, according to Army Regulation 350-1, is to convert "non-prior service enlisted personnel . . . into well disciplined, highly motivated, and physically conditioned soldiers, who are qualified in their basic weapon and drilled in the fundamentals of soldiery [Barnes, 1972, p. 59].

The initial exposure to military life occurs at recruit or basic training. Here the civilian effects the transition to military life. It should be apparent from the missions previously stated that " . . . basic training is aimed as much at instilling certain attitudes, responses, and loyalties in the new recruit as it is at teaching him specific skills . . . [Barber, 1972a, p. 161].

Snyder and Caylor [1969] pointed out in a recent study that the initial few weeks of active duty are extremely important; they are the soldier's first direct experience



with Army life, and they offer not only the first, but perhaps the best opportunity the Army will have to instill the values and beliefs it considers important for effective service. This early experience represents the only experience ALL enlisted men<sup>1</sup> have in common. The nature of this experience is likely to have an important bearing on the entire subsequent performance of the individual.

In discussing the effects of basic military training on the attitudes of Air Force enlistees, Harburg [1971] said, "basic training, as the young man's introduction to the Air Force, provides the unique opportunity to turn on the young man to the possibilities of a satisfying existence in the organization he has chosen to join. In a time of political and military uncertainty, it is important we not forget the primary objective of basic training, to offer the young man a sense of purpose and positive direction into which he may channel his efforts [p. 2]."

## B. ENVIRONMENT

The recruit or basic training environment is usually completely alien to anything a recruit has experienced before. It " . . . is unique in American society, as it represents the only instance when individuals can be forcibly confined against their will, and compelled to perform certain tasks . . . It also represents the most radical attempt to change identity

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<sup>1</sup>Although most of the studies/articles referenced in this thesis deal with male recruits, the author feels, generally speaking, that they are applicable to female recruits as well; masculine personal pronouns are generally meant to include both female and male personnel.



and behavior that the average person will encounter [Bourne, 1967, p. 195]." All recruits entering recruit training encounter a number of psychosocial situations that they are unlikely to have experienced before, although they are not entirely unique to recruit training. According to Bourne [1967], the recruit training process is fundamentally one of acculturation in which the recruit is subjected to a forced change of reference group, and the skills he learns are basically those necessary for survival and successful adaption under these circumstances. It lacks any great opportunity for excelling, and its existence is predicated on a future with which it has little continuity. The weeks at the training center comprise, in effect, a temporal cocoon in which a phenomenal metamorphosis must take place. According to Marlowe [1959], "basic training stands outside the normal flow of time and is essentially ahistorical [p. 75]."



#### IV. THE TRANSITION FROM CIVILIAN TO MILITARY LIFE

##### A. TRANSITION

An individual entering the Armed Forces finds himself in a whirlwind of activity specifically directed toward transforming him from a civilian into a recruit in the shortest possible time. According to Dantel and Lifrak [1969], he steps from American society-as-a-whole (i.e., home, school, employment, peer group, and social/cultural fabric) where emphasis has been placed upon developing independence, autonomous decision-making, respect for individual differences, privilege to opposing viewpoints, committee-style deliberation, virtual worship of the single human being, etc., into a subsystem (i.e., recruit training) governed by methods, rules and standards of conduct which require the individual to sacrifice his autonomy, immediately and subserviently, for the goals of the group. He brings to the military an established array of "taken-for-granted" and "go-without-sayings," many of which no longer work.

##### B. RECRUIT REACTION

Coming from the relative freedom of movement and choice that characterize civilian life, the new recruit may find his initiation into the military a traumatic experience which has been referred to as "culture shock" by Coates and Pellegrin [1965]. From the start, demands are made of him which he is





not sure how to meet. He is involved in the situation 24 hours a day without relief and without any opportunity to modify the environment. The effect is that he is often stunned, dazed, and frightened. For many recruits, this is a period of anxiety which exceeds anything they have experienced before. Datel and Lifrak [1969] suggested that the stress of basic training is considerably greater than the stresses of living experienced by psychiatric patients. Datel found that a recruit's stress level, in fact, is actually considerably higher than that found in helicopter medics flying dangerous rescue missions or in soldiers anticipating an attack from the enemy. Weybrew [1967] pointed out that, " . . . stresses seldom occur one at a time," but that, " . . . real life situations characteristically involve multiple stressors, often imposed simultaneously or in some cases sequentially [p. 331]."

Bourne [1967] had the following to say about initial reactions to recruit or basic training:

Entering the Army is probably the most acutely shocking event that they (recruits) have ever experienced. It represents the most destructive threat to their adaptive capacity that they have ever had to endure. From the start, the stunned, frightened behavior in this situation bears a striking resemblance to that seen in physical disaster situations such as bombing raids, fires, or earthquakes. On the basis of much of the behavior observed among the recruits when they arrive in Basic Training, the experience does seem to represent in many ways a personal disaster, with the first 24 hours being equivalent to the period of the catastrophe in a civilian disaster situation [p. 189].

The controls, hectic scheduling of activity, loss of emotional support, etc., encountered by a recruit early in



his military experience invokes in him a resentment of the service, anger, and an intense longing for the freedom of civilian life he so recently left behind him.

Snyder and Caylor [1969] pointed out that complaints about treatment of recruits that reach the Army through civilian channels--including Congress--might suggest that a good deal of the difficulty lies in the unwillingness of recruits to accept the necessary rigors of military training. But they indicated that research, CAREER and TRANSITION I<sup>2</sup>, had not supported this conclusion. As a result of their research on the effects of the first few days of active duty, they found that, " . . . this first experience failed to provide the recruit with adequate social support and guidance at the time he most needs them--during the stress of his first introduction to military service [p. 19]." They cited the following brief recruit quotations which are by no means universal, but are nonetheless typical, in support of their findings.

They have you all confused, yelling at you. You don't even know what you are doing at times.

The change from civilian life to Army life is a hard one. The Army should take more care and understanding in this . . . .

The first week was a long grueling waste of time. Details and dirty work, not learning, were the order of the day, and I was disappointed with the poor organization and bad handling . . . [p. 19].

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<sup>2</sup>Research conducted by the Human Resources Research Office Division No. 3 (Recruit Training) at Monterey, California, under Work Unit TRANSITION, Research on Factors of Civilian-Military Transition of Army Recruits, and Work Unit CAREER, The Army as a Career for Existing and Potential Qualified Personnel. 1960-62.



Basic training differs not only among the four military services but also between various basic training commands within each service. Most researchers agree, however, that Marine Corps basic training is the most rigorous. The following quotations are based on interviews with several dozen Marine Corps boot camp graduates by Barnes [1972].

A strange looking man in a Smokey-the-Bear hat says, "All right, you shitheads, you have ten seconds to get off this bus and five of them are gone.

. . . when you get off the bus you are to stand at attention on the yellow footprints. You know what attention mean? It means stand up straight! I catch any of you maggots farting around and I'll kick the shit out of you right here. Now move!

All you have to do, privates, is exactly as you're goddamn told. Is that clear? [p. 62].

#### C. SIMILARITIES TO OTHER "TOTAL" INSTITUTIONS

Many features found in the transition from civilian to military life may also be found by individuals entering any so-called "total institution" which includes institutions with such diverse functions as orphanages, sanitariums, penitentiaries, boarding schools, and monasteries [Goffman, 1957]. The following comments by Goffman about total institutions could well be a description of some recruit training commands.

. . . ego-invested separateness from fellow inmates is significantly diminished in many areas of activity, and tasks are prescribed that are INFRA DIGNITATEM . . . Areas of autonomous decision are eliminated through the process of collective scheduling of daily activities. Many channels of communication with the outside world are restricted or closed off completely. Verbal discrediting occurs in many forms as a matter of course. Expressive signs of respect for the staff are coercively, and continuously demanded. And the effect of each of these conditions is multiplied by having to witness the mortifications of one's fellow inmates [p. 50].



#### D. CHANGES AND FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

Fortunately, as pointed out by Janowitz [1959], the shock technique which has been an essential element of the older forms of discipline based on domination is being or has been modified. According to Janowitz, " . . . the impact of technology has forced a shift in the practices of military authority . . . . Military authority must shift from reliance on practices based on domination to wider utilization of manipulation . . . . Manipulation involves positive incentives rather than physical threats . . . . The indirect techniques of manipulation are designed to take into account the individual soldier's predispositions [p. 39]."

The residues of shock treatment persist, but military training has become a more gradual process of assimilation, and a process of fostering positive incentives and loyalties through a team concept. Evidence of this is seen in the new experimental approach to basic training called the merit-reward system. It attempts to condition the behavior of recruits by using carefully controlled rewards rather than harshly imposed punishments and physical and psychological harassment.

The goal of reducing stress in recruit training has been traditionally questioned. The argument frequently proffered is that the stress of recruit training will help ensure effectiveness and survival in combat and other assignments. Although the "transfer of learning" in this situation is questionable, the crux of the matter seems to be the appropriate level or degree of stress that would be conducive to good performance and adjustment.





Crawford [1969], in his discussion of the problem which military training programs have in keeping pace with the times, stressed the need for these programs to readjust themselves to the changing levels of recruit education, physical development, and maturity. The military services are made up of men and women from society at large, and, as such, is simply a reflection of that society. As society changes, so must the military [Commander's Digest, April 4, 1974].



## V. THE NATURE OF ADJUSTMENT

### A. DEFINITION

Although there are numerous definitions of adjustment, only a few will be presented here.

According to Smith, Wilson and Salter [1955], individuals have many needs and desires which they try to satisfy. If attempts to satisfy these needs are blocked, or in conflict with other needs, then there is an increase in tension within the individual; and adjustment refers to the ways the individual takes to reduce these tensions and satisfy his needs. Adjustment to military life refers to the process of reducing the tensions set up in the trainee by his entry into the military.

Stouffer [1949] defined adjustment as " . . . that adaptation to changing environmental demands which minimize psychological tension or anxiety [p. 82]."

Lazarus [1963] pointed out that the verb "to adjust" means to fit, to make correspond, to adapt, or to accomodate. He further explained that the term "to adjust," as used in psychology, means that individuals must accomodate themselves in order to fit certain demands of their environment; and adjustment consists of the processes by means of which they manage these demands.

According to Sawrey and Telford [1971], adjustment emphasizes socialization of the individual and development of



coping behavior. Psychological adjustment consists of the processes by means of which the individual copes with the physical and social demands and expectations of the world. They stated that the individual who adequately deals with these demands and expectations is "well adjusted."

And finally, Heyns [1958] stated that "the phrase 'process of adjustment' refers to the entire sequence from the time a need, tension, or drive is aroused until the need is satisfied, the tension reduced, or the drive extinguished [p. 5]."

#### B. STRESS, ANXIETY, CONFLICT, FRUSTRATION

Throughout the literature on adjustment, the terms conflict, anxiety, stress, frustration and tension are mentioned time and time again. For a better understanding of these terms and the need for adjustive action to reduce or resolve these conditions, a brief discussion of each will be presented. Various levels of these conditions, and their effects on performance and achievement will also be discussed.

Basowitz [1959] defines anxiety as "the signal of danger" which mobilizes the human organism's resources at all levels of functioning in the interests of conservation, defense, and self-preservation [p. 286]." It is the conscious experience of intense dread and foreboding. When the individual lacks effective methods of handling anxiety, maladjustment occurs.

Stress is the threat to the fulfillment of basic needs, the maintenance of regulated functioning, and to growth and development [Basowitz, 1959]. When demands are beyond a person's resources, stress is produced. According to Sawrey



[1971], " . . . stimulus conditions that result in frustration as a response can be referred to as 'stressful.' Stress is a kind of class name for a variety of barriers, blockings, and thwartings [p. 203]." A blocking condition that is particularly relevant to adjustment to recruit training is man's social environment. The social environment influences an individual's need-satisfying behavior by way of formal rules, regulations and customs and is potentially capable of preventing the immediate and direct satisfaction of needs.

Lazarus [1963] stated that "the social institutions of the culture into which a person is born demand conformity to certain social values and culturally developed patterns of behavior [p. 4]." Throughout life these various demands are expressed as expectations that others have of individuals. "These expectations are usually enforced by the threat of physical punishment or of psychological penalties . . . They operate as powerful pressures on an individual to which he must accomodate if he is to have comfortable and effective intercourse with his social environment [Lazarus, 1963, p.4]."

An inevitable and powerful source of need-thwarting springs up when the demands that require adjustive behavior are in conflict. When conflict occurs between two powerful yet incompatible needs, the task of making a 'satisfactory adjustment is far more difficult. Under such circumstances, signs of stress are likely to emerge.

Heynes [1958] describes frustration as an "internal state of the organism," which can be observed when an individual is not getting what he wants; and as an "event or state of





affairs," which refers to a barrier itself and to the conditions that prevent successful response. In the latter sense, prison walls and the presence of guards are frustrating to the desire of inmates to escape confinement. Conflicts and frustrations are inevitable and in order to resolve them, man learns or adopts different modes of thinking, believing and acting.

According to Sawrey and Telford [1971], human fears, anxieties, and feeling of insecurity are widely recognized as having important effects on behavior. In a response to a threat, signaled by anxiety, an individual may mobilize and intensify his capacities toward a higher level of functioning, learning, and new forms of adjustment [Basowitz, 1959].

Sawrey stated that:

relatively low levels of anxiety can be tolerated by the individual and may be conducive to constructive and creative effort. Low anxiety levels can motivate learning and constructive problem solving. When stresses are minimal the behavior effects are alertness, attentiveness, and vigilance. A low anxiety level may sustain creative efforts and behavioral progress and lead to the attainment of a reality-anchored feeling of security [p. 37].

As stresses build up, anxiety increases to the point where the individual becomes apprehensive and agitated, and finally behavioral disorganization and panic result. If anxiety level is too high, performance breaks down and irrelevant and non-adaptive responses occur.

Anxiety appears to be cumulative. As it mounts, effectiveness in dealing with new situations is impaired. This leads to new sources of anxiety and the number of conditions that give rise to anxiety continue to multiply. High anxiety



becomes a chronic condition and interferes with achievements [Sawrey and Telford, 1971].

### C. PERSONAL QUALITIES AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

According to Korman [1971], the type of behavior a person will engage in is a function of the kind of person he is in terms of his relatively enduring traits and the environment in which he happens to find himself.

Effective performance and adjustment depends in part on the individual's personal qualities or traits; therefore, the ability of an individual to adjust or the probability that he will adjust should concern military management prior to an individual's arrival at recruit training.

Hollingshead [1946] pointed out that although all men in a given military situation are subject to the same external conditions, they do not react in a similar manner. He stated that the study of life-histories revealed significant differences between the premilitary experiences of the man who is able to adjust to military life and the one that is not.

In discussing the emotional requirements of military life, Janowitz [1951] pointed out that " . . . in general, most emotional maladjustments unless properly dealt with are likely to become exacerbated under the conditions of military life [p. 1]." An individual's adjustment to military service is affected not only by so-called "personality" variables, but also by the social characteristics of American society and the historical circumstances under which the recruit enters the military service [Coates and Pellegrin, 1965].



Performance and adjustment are also affected by the structure and actions of the organization in which the individual serves. Whether an organization takes the necessary action to facilitate an individual's adjustment is important. Recruits require time to adjust from civilian to military life. They have much to learn and very little time in which to learn it. Whether an individual eventually performs effectively quite often depends on whether he receives the extra time or special support needed, especially during recruit training [Ginzberg, 1959a].

#### D. DEMANDS

The demands of recruit training tend to be so excessive that a recruit cannot comply with all of them to the letter. With respect to these demands, most recruits are already sufficiently competent in interpersonal situations to learn rather quickly how to meet the training demands with a reasonable degree of efficiency and a minimum of anxiety. They can react to the situation of too much to do in too little time by increasing effort, cooperative effort and division of labor, or by cutting corners and taking risks by letting some things "slide" while concentrating on others. Of course, there are a small number of recruits who cannot meet these demands. The recruit who interprets every command literally is likely to be completely overwhelmed by anxiety at his inability to achieve the extreme standards of performance he thus sets for himself. Such compulsive behavior is usually doomed to failure, and the recruit that exhibits this type of behavior



is unlikely to complete the training program. Instead, he is a likely prospect for emotional disturbance or running away in an attempt to remove himself from the tightly controlled situation in which he has not learned to operate with any self-confidence.

#### E. ADEQUACY OF ADJUSTMENT

Recruit training serves as a process to screen out those individuals, " . . . with low capacities for anxiety, insufficient self-esteem to withstand criticism, inability to control or suppress anger, or those with latent neuroses or psychoses [Wamsley, 1973]. Lazarus [1963], mentioned this screening process in discussing adequacy of adjustment. He stated that "one of the most difficult and challenging problems in the psychology of adjustment is the matter of evaluating the adequacy of adjustment. One practical reason why we might wish to make such evaluations is that the military services need to screen out men who are emotionally disturbed at the time of induction or who are likely to become so under the stresses of military life . . . [p. 13]."





## VI. SOURCES OF TENSION/STRESS

There are many sources and levels of tension/stress in the military recruit training environment. Some of these, such as deprivation of material comforts, loss of privacy, loss of emotional support, complexity of the organization, etc., have been outlined by Cook and Christi [1951]. These and others are briefly described below. It is important to identify and understand these sources of tension with a view toward, ". . . controlling or eliminating the environmental situations producing the stress responsivity . . . [Weybrew, 1967, p. 325].

### A. DEPRIVATION OF MATERIAL COMFORTS

Many recruits are deprived of material comforts which they had previously taken for granted. Their quarters or barracks can be described as austere. They live in open bays or 4/5 man cubicles (women only). Each man is assigned a bunk which is plain, unadorned and sometimes downright uncomfortable. On more than one occasion, a new recruit's bunk has reeked of a former occupant who happened to suffer from enuresis, or contained a former occupant's body lice. Each man must live out of a locker or seabag in which must be stored all of his authorized possessions. Bathing and toilet facilities are more often than not communal and distant. His clothing and



spaces must be kept clean without the aid of modern conveniences. There are many other comforts or "niceties" that are conspicuously absent from the training environment.

#### B. LOSS OF PRIVACY

At the most personal level, recruits face a loss of privacy. A recruit can easily complete his training without having once been alone. All activities, including those of a very personal nature, take place in large or small groups or at least in the presence of others. A recruit's physical being, at least, is totally and completely exposed to those about him; and quite often produces in him a feeling of embarrassment and inadequacy. This situation is quite alien to his pre-military environment, and as a result, he suffers high levels of tension in his attempt to adjust. A study done by Broedling and Goldsamt [1971] showed that recruits encountered the most adjustment difficulty in getting used to less privacy. They pointed out that over half of the recruits in their study had adjustment problems in this area, and suggested that perhaps this was symptomatic of the "environmental shock" described by Bourne [1967].

#### C. LOSS OF EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

A very important source of tension in the recruit training environment is the loss of emotional supports formerly provided by a recruit's family and friends. Heyns [1958] pointed out that most individuals are, " . . . dependent on others for satisfaction of needs and for emotional support," and they



"show signs of anxiety when separation occurs . . . [p. 128]."

In discussing the tensions of military life, Janowitz [1951] stated that, " . . . the general tensions of adult life plus the specific tensions of military service must be coped with by the individual without the support or gratification of family life traditional to civil society [p. 2]." In discussing World War II soldiers who were excessively dependent on their families, Ginzberg [1959b] pointed out that, " . . . as long as they had special support, they could cope successfully with the strains and stresses of the outside world;" but that, "Army service upset this equilibrium [41]." He further pointed out that when a man joins the military, his separation from family involves not only the loss of direct personal relations with loved ones, but also the transfer from an environment that he knows intimately to one that is more or less completely alien.

#### D. LEVELING PROCESS

Some recruits, particularly those at the extremes of the ability and environmental spectrums, suffer tension as a result of a common training program being given to recruits with a wide variety of capacities and backgrounds. Janowitz [1971] referred to this or a similar process when he said, "the very notion of basic training implies that there is a set of skills which all members of the institution can and must know . . . There is no ability grouping and all recruits are mixed together . . . [p. 202]." A review of the Navy's training problems by Dunlap [1954] stressed the neglect of



individual differences; and Cline, Beals and Seidman [1956] pointed out that basic training could be made more efficient (not to mention less anxiety producing) by grouping recruits by ability level, thus individualizing training to some extent.

#### E. HIGHLY COMPLEX ORGANIZATION

Adjustment to any organization is difficult for many people. Several reasons for this difficulty is pointed out by Kahn [1964]. According to him, "Within an organization members behave in ways in which they would not behave outside it. They use titles that would not be used outside. They wear uniforms or costumes . . . Above all, their behavior in organizations shows a selectivity, a restrictiveness, and a persistence that is not to be observed in the same persons when outside of the organization [p. 5]." In a civilian organization, unlike a military organization, members that encounter difficulty with adjustment or find the situation unsatisfactory can make their objections known, secure a change within the organization, or more importantly they can leave or escape. But in a military organization, these options are usually not possible, and as Heyns [1958] has pointed out, "anxiety is most likely to occur when efforts to escape the danger are ineffective or impossible [p. 128]."

Most recruits have never experienced an organization of the complexity of a military service. There is a multitude of different rules, different kinds of people, and different ways of action. According to Hollingshead [1946], not only must a recruit learn that the scheduling and allocation of





time is dictated by the organization, but he must also learn that the organization even defines how the task or activity allotted to a given time is to be accomplished. Recruits are frequently at a loss as to how to behave. As pointed out earlier, an individual's behavior and adjustment is affected by the structure and the actions of the organization in which he serves. In a recent study, Broedling and Goldsamt [1971] pointed out that "following Navy rules and regulations and getting used to Navy words and expressions" caused recruits much adjustment difficulty, second only to "getting used to less privacy."

#### F. HIGH DEGREE OF REGIMENTATION AND DISCIPLINE

A certain amount of regimentation is common to all military organizations; but during basic training, a recruit must adjust to a relatively high degree of regimentation and discipline. According to Janowitz [1951], "The military establishment is a social organization which involves continual exercise of management and command in order to achieve a planned coordination of immense scope and detail . . . As opposed to civilian life where large areas of human behavior are self-directed or where coordination takes place on an automatic or traditional basis, military life gives the individual the impression of extremely close supervision of his behavior [p. 2]." He further stated that the military had often been characterized as being "authoritarian, stratified, and traditional [p. 3]."



## G. VERY LOW STATUS

In a military organization, a recruit is at the very bottom of the status ladder, yet he often brings with him a strong desire for status recognition. Needless to say, these unfulfilled desires create problems for the recruit. To further complicate matters, he may view his fellow trainees as competitors for status. The problem of low status is apparently made more intense where there is a lack of knowledge about the kinds of behavior that will bring him increased status, and this is often the case. Bourne [1967] described the change in status from civilian life to recruit training in an article entitled, "Some Observations on the Psychological Phenomena Seen In Basic Training." He stated that in civilian life, an individual comes to expect his social environment to accord him the status he feels his own achievements or qualities warrant; but that during basic training, a recruit, ". . . is subjected to a series of stripping processes whereby the mortification of the self occurs . . . Personal identifying items are removed, and in return institutional equivalents are supplied. Particular meaning for the late adolescent are the loss of personal clothing and the shaving of the head; the latter factor reaffirms in his mind the Army's right to do with him what it wishes even in terms of such intimate areas as one's physical appearance [p. 191]." A recruit quickly learns that he is no longer an individual with the right of personal choices, alternatives and decisions, but that he is a "body" with a last name and service number.



## H. LACK OF OR ERRONEOUS INFORMATION

From the time a recruit enters a recruiting station until he "learns the ropes" at his first duty station, he actively seeks information concerning this new "way of life" he is considering or has chosen; and he is often frustrated by a lack of or partial response to his questions. At times, he is even given erroneous information, deliberately or due to ignorance, particularly during the recruiting process. A study by Broedling and Goldsamt [1971] showed that the initial accuracy of information about recruit training affected a recruit's ease of transition, as over 4 in 10 believed they would have adjusted more easily if the recruiter had been more accurate in describing recruit training. As mentioned in the previous section, a recruit suffers anxiety and a feeling of bewilderment due to the lack of knowledge about the kinds of behavior that will bring him increased status. This is often true also with respect to training requirements, particularly early in the training program. This "fear of the unknown" is further complicated or worsened by "scuttlebutt"<sup>3</sup> which he receives from fellow recruits that are in more advanced stages of the training program. These "senior" recruits are prone to exaggerate their own difficulties; and often intentionally give erroneous information to new recruits. Bourne [1967] stated that "during the first few days after the recruit arrives in the Army, he receives either very little

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<sup>3</sup>Scuttlebutt - Navy terminology for gossip or hearsay.



or erroneous information about what to expect in the forthcoming weeks, which tends to maintain his state of anxiety [p. 189]."

## I. VALUE CONFLICT

"The values men live by may be only dimly perceived, but their power and influence are prevailing because they are so deeply imbedded. As long as a man's life proceeds on a more or less even keel, a substantial congruence is likely to exist between his values and the demands of his environment [Ginzberg, 1959b, p. 230]." But in a military environment, this even keel is very likely to be upset. Frequently, the values of the military service or of a fellow recruit conflicts with those the recruit brings with him from civilian life. The psychoanalyst, Karen Horney, in her writings (The Neurotic Personality of Our Time [1937] and New Ways in Psycholanalysis [1939]) has emphasized the importance of cultural conflicts. She has cited many examples of values within a culture or between subcultures of a society that are inconsistent and incompatible.

Value conflict definitely seems to pose for the individual special problems of adjustment. According to Ginzberg [1959b], while millions were able to adjust to military life during World War II, many failed in the effort. He pointed out that "one of the causes of their failure was an inability to put aside the values by which they had always lived [p. 102]." He further explained that some soldiers " . . . became ineffective because of a conflict between the basic values





which had guided their lives prior to induction and the conditions of Army life in which they found themselves. They could not change the Army or the demands which the new environment made on them; but neither could they free themselves from a commitment to ingrained values [p. 104]."

#### J. HECTIC SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

It is commonplace in a military basic training command for trainees to be faced with more than they can accomplish and stiff sanctions for failure. There are various ways of handling this type of situation which have been mentioned earlier in this paper; but regardless of the method chosen, a high degree of stress or tension is produced. A study by Snyder [1954] which represented responses by 272 basic trainees showed that lack of sleep and lack of time for personal affairs were highly salient problems for most trainees. These problems were attributed to poor coordination and misdirected effort at the company level, but they can also be attributed to the hectic training schedule. In a recruit training program, there are many skills to be learned, much information and knowledge to be digested, not to mention the many hours that must be devoted to in and outprocessing activities such as uniform and gear issue; inoculations; medical and dental examinations; issuance of identification cards, name tags, and orders; travel arrangements, etc.. All these activities must be done in a relatively short period of time, and could never be completed in a leisurely manner.



## K. AUTHORITY

Many recruits that experience a high degree of anxiety or tension and have severe adjustment problems in the recruit training environment are those that do not seem to be able to handle authority relationships. They seem to resent authority, and this resentment can often be traced to parent-child relationships. Obviously, a question that comes to mind is why these recruits chose to join the military service. The answer seems to be that in their attempt to escape an unhappy or uncomfortable situation at home and/or work about which they had little insight, they hastily made a decision to join an organization, the nature of which they did not consider or at least did not understand. To put it bluntly, they "jumped from the frying pan into the fire."

Campbell and McCormack [1957] indicated that for the majority of recruits, the military environment is more rigidly hierarchial and authoritarian than the homes, schools, and jobs from which they were drawn. Heyns [1958] pointed out that many adjustment problems that involve relationships to authority begin in early child-parent relationships and persist into adult life; and that in reacting to authority, these individuals are usually submissive and compliant or belligerently non-compliant. Even those recruits in the former category feel guilty about their submissiveness or hostility.

The extent or degree of tension/stress caused by demands of authority figures often depends on the attitude toward the person making the demand, the number and frequency of the demands, the capacity of the individual to comply with the



demands, and the results of the compliance or non-compliance. According to Janowitz [1959], " . . . in any organization, civilian or military, authority systems operate on a day-to-day basis or fail to operate because of the status--that is, the prestige and the respect--the officers have; and the effectiveness of the military authority is deeply conditioned by the status and prestige which civilian society accords the military profession [p. 34]."



VII. STAFF PERSONNEL AND THEIR EFFECT ON RECRUIT  
ADJUSTMENT AND PERFORMANCE

The following discussion will primarily be limited to the company commander. He spends more time with recruits than any other staff member and is the central figure in instilling proper attitudes and behavior.

A. DUTIES AND INFLUENCE OF THE COMPANY COMMANDER

The duties and importance of a company commander are illustrated in the following quotes from a recruit training curriculum [NAVPERS 91823C].

The Company Commander is responsible for initial training and supervision of her company, and its growth and development in understanding the purposes and responsibilities of military training. She is concerned with order, discipline, welfare and morale, teamwork, adherence to the daily schedule of training and to regulations. In general, the company's daily progressive performance is a direct responsibility of the Company Commander [p. 43].

Because of the strong military atmosphere (of recruit training) together with the fact that the Company Commander exemplifies this atmosphere in exercising direct military control of the company, she is undoubtedly the person having the most influence upon the recruit. Only those mature petty officers who are singularly qualified to assume the responsibility of this leadership in developing desirable habits and attitudes through their own example should be assigned as Company Commanders [p. ix].

A company commander plays an extremely important role in a recruit's adjustment to the military environment. He spends a considerable amount of his time counseling recruits with training and personal problems. If he " . . . has a bad





attitude, then a large amount of implanting of his negative feelings may be transferred to the recruit . . . [Harburg, 1971, p. 12];" and if he is not a mature and stable individual and/or does not have some knowledge and understanding of human behavior, he may exacerbate a recruit's problems.

## B. SELECTION

To be a successful and effective company commander, a person must want the job; and he must be carefully selected and trained. Harburg [1971] stated that "the attempt should be made to screen applicants for training instructor positions; a man who has demonstrated the ability to earn the respect of his subordinates and his superiors should be the primary target of a selection process [p. 13]." Similarly, Pollich [1947] pointed out that a person selected for duty as company commander must be of the highest caliber. He stressed the importance of a company commander being expected to "lead" not "push" recruits through this very important period of military service; and that recruits "must want to follow him (the company commander) since he represents the best the Navy has to offer, the idea of what a Navy man should be [p. 31]." "If the selection process of training instructors is a good one, the training program will be directly benefitted [Harburg, 1971, p. 12]."

## C. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

According to Harburg [1971], trainers should receive as much education as possible in leadership and the behavior aspects of individual and group work. He stressed the importance



of educating the training staff in "what it is that is different about the new generation and why they are so different [p. 17]." He pointed out that "as long as there is a threatening atmosphere between the two groups, the problems can only be magnified, not resolved [p. 17]." This situation may be illustrated by quoting a trainer interviewed by Harburg-- "These young kids are harder than ever to train. They don't have the respect for authority they used to have [p. 17]."

#### D. RESULTS OF INEFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Today's military "leaders must be strong and responsive to the changing needs and life styles of men and women who must follow them [Commander's Digest, 1974, p. 11]." This is particularly true at the recruit training level; deficiencies in leadership at this level result in negative recruit attitudes, poor morale, reduced motivation, and poor performance and adjustment in general. A company under the leadership of an ineffective company commander, more often than not, exhibits low morale, poor discipline and performance; and frequently has an unusually high attrition rate.

Ginzberg [1959b], referring to World War II soldiers, stated that "it is impossible to calculate the number of men who became ineffective because of poor leadership but it was undoubtedly substantial [p. 69]." A survey of recruits during basic training [Snyder, 1954] showed that one of the three general types of factors which detracted from the effectiveness of training and thereby lowered morale was ineffective leadership.



Although the selection, training, and performance of company commanders/drill instructors differs among the various military services, it is felt that the Navy and its recruit training commands are negligent in this area even though they verbalize their recognition of the importance of selecting and assigning only experienced, well-qualified personnel to recruit training commands/company commanders positions.



### VIII. DYSFUNCTIONAL REACTIONS TO RECRUIT TRAINING

Sawrey and Teleford [1971] stated that defense mechanisms constitute an evasion rather than a real meeting with the situation; an individual resorts to a "less satisfactory but better-than-nothing" solution to his problems when his aptitudes or self-concept or environmental threats prevent him from meeting and solving problems in a straightforward way. They also stated that "defense mechanisms are handicaps when they become our only way of handling threats. If a person can meet problems in a straight forward, offensive, or defensive-avoidance pattern . . . ; if he can keep a reasonable contact with reality . . . ; if he can remain flexible . . . , he is not a slave to his defenses [p. 39]."

There are numerous defense behavior mechanisms, but only those dysfunctional ones that are most commonly seen in basic training will be discussed here. A study by Ekman [1960] showed that the two largest groups of men in the Army that demonstrated dysfunctional reactions in an attempt to cope with the anxiety of entering the military service and undergoing basic training were: (1) men who repeatedly visited the dispensary with complaints for which no organic basis could be established ("sick bay commandos"), and (2) men who had gone AWOL from training.





## A. SICK BAY COMMANDOS

According to Ekman [1960], "repeated visitors to the dispensary with hypochondriacal, psychosomatic or conversion symptoms often internalize their hostility and distress, expressing a protest against the situation by being unable to do what is demanded in spite of an avowed desire to train [p. 18]." This type of reaction has been observed for years in the Armed Forces. Ginzberg [1959c] listed the following factors as initial evidence of ineffectiveness in World War II:

	<u>Percent</u>
Poor performance	22.7
Disciplinary problem	5.7
Symptomatic behavior	19.6
Somatic complaints	<u>52.0</u>
	100.0 [p. 134]

Under symptomatic behavior he included soldiers with fainting spells, enuresis, bizarre behavior, suicide attempts, etc.. Somatic complaints included soldiers who had ill-defined aches and pains in the head, back, stomach and legs.

Although it is unlikely that these factors, which represent total service time, would be the same in peace as they were in war, the latter two factors listed still are among the most common dysfunctional reaction to recruit training.

An explanation of why illness is used as a defense mechanism is proffered by Sawrey and Teleford [1971] in their discussion of "adjustment by ailment." They listed the following



consequences of illness which are conducive to its utilization as a defense mechanism:

1. Illness operates as a socially acceptable excuse for evading many of life's problems.
2. It serves as a means of avoiding responsibility and provides a plausible excuse for the absence of achievement.
3. Illness is a means of obtaining a relaxation of discipline and of avoiding blame and punishment.
4. Increased attention, sympathy, and care are normal consequences of being ill.
5. Bizarre, unusual, or baffling illness may provide an individual uniqueness or status.
6. Illness may be perceived as a punishment, which relieves anxiety that springs from a sense of guilt. [p. 58].

#### B. AWOL/UA

Coleman [1959] pointed out that withdrawal (physical and psychological) is a fundamental type of reaction to stress. He stated that as an individual learns to associate certain situations with frustration and hurt, he may avoid instead of attacking them. According to Ekman [1960], "men who go AWOL can be considered as impulsively expressing hostility toward authority figures, by attempting to put distance between themselves and their problem [p. 18]."

Dr. Darrell C. Jewett, a former career psychiatrist in the Army who headed the Mental Hygiene Unit at Fort Ord, California, pointed out that many insecure men go AWOL during or shortly after basic training because they are not stable enough to recognize the artificiality of the training environment, and go along with it as a matter of expediency; they



tend to personalize the process in their own thinking and emotions, and it tends to shatter their sense of personal identity [Barnes, 1971].

Barnes [1971] stated that the AWOL rate--one out of every five Army recruits went AWOL during his first few months of training in 1969--was high enough to indicate that a substantial number of young people have great difficulty adjusting to the behavioral demands of the military.



## IX. THE ADJUSTMENT OF WOMEN TO RECRUIT TRAINING

### A. MISSION

The missions of recruit/basic training for women are similar to those previously given for men, although there are some differences. For example, in the Navy, the differences grow out of the concept that at the present time, women are not considered sea-going personnel; although a pilot program is in effect aboard the USS Sanctuary. One of the primary objectives of recruit training for men is training for life at sea; whereas, for women the emphasis is shifted to preparation for the administration, operational, and the service billets to which they will most likely be assigned. As in recruit training for men, the main emphasis is placed upon the growth, development, and personal adjustment of the individual [NAVPERS 10848-E, 1971].

### B. SPECIAL PROBLEMS FACED BY WOMEN

Women share with men a variety of difficulties in adjusting to a military environment; there are, however, special problems faced by women in the military. These problems arise in part from the attitudes of civilians and servicemen, and because of woman's role/status in American society and the difficulty of adapting these to military life.

#### 1. Attitudes

The best data available on the attitudes of the American public toward service by women in the military are found in





Treadwell's [1954] history of the Women's Army Corps (WAC) in World War II. When first established, the WAC received tremendous publicity, but little attention was given to its mission. The public was more interested in trivial things, such as whether "WACS" wore regulation underwear, than in what jobs they performed. Complaints often voiced against the WACS were: "women can't take orders, won't work for other women, can't stand tense situations [Treadwell, 1954]." Rumors and whispering campaigns concerning allegedly immoral behavior of the WACS became so widespread that the situation was finally investigated by Army Intelligence. As pointed out by Treadwell [1954], the investigation revealed that a vicious slander campaign, born of hostility and ignorance, was being conducted by civilians and servicemen alike. The strong, unexplained adverse attitude of servicemen toward women in the military and the highly unfavorable public opinion hindered both procurement efforts and the adjustment of women to the military.

Although the attitude of the public, in general, has changed considerably since World War II, particularly in the last ten years, the attitudes of servicemen have continued to be largely negative. In an article entitled, "Women in the Armed Forces: Are They Needed Now?," Immen [1961] pointed out that negative attitudes toward military service for women continue to be serious and widespread within the military services. Recent studies by Coye [1972, 1973] appear to support this contention.



## 2. Role/Status

The traditional status and roles of women in American society create special or at least intensify problems of adjustment for women in today's military. Traditionally, the place of the woman was in the home, where she was expected to play the role of wife, housekeeper, and mother. In the past, it was considered "unladylike" for women to work outside the home, unless it was of extreme necessity. "Assumptions regarding the physical and psychological differences between men and women largely determined their respective roles in society [Bass, 1971, p. 223]." According to Prather [1971], women in American society are portrayed as serving others in the nurturing and caretaking roles such as mother, housewife, volunteer, or nurse. Women who would not or could not play these roles were regarded with attitudes ranging from pity to scorn.

Even though, as pointed out earlier, attitudes have changed in recent years, there continue to be activities/occupations defined as appropriate for men or for women. "If a woman seeks a job outside the traditional line of women's work, she is assumed to be invading unnatural territory which may not only serve as a threat to her male co-workers, but which may also raise questions about her innate competence [Prather, 1971, p. 176]." "When women seek to enter occupations or industries previously occupied mainly by men, doubt, resistance, rejection, and hostility ordinarily appear [Coates and Pellegrin, 1965, p. 357]."



Women are socialized to be more oriented toward people, to be other-directed and dependent, whereas men are raised to be more independent, aggressive, and achievement-oriented [DeLamater and Fidell, 1971]. Coye [1973] suggested that cultural bias and the socialization process play a major role in developing both male and female attitudes toward women in the Navy. According to Sears [1957], women are encouraged to avoid aggression and independence; and " . . . society's image of femininity and feminine traits fails to allow a woman to be both feminine and aggressive [Coye, 1972, p. 57]."

According to Wilson [1971], our culture maintains the attitude that women are not the equal of men; women are considered subordinate, dependent, unforceful, emotional, and possessed of poor cognitive processes. Many women in the Navy "believe they hold less than equal status with their male counterparts . . . [Coye, 1973, p. 76]." Referring to the status of women in the military, Coye [1972] stated "the notion seems to persist within the military that women are nothing but defective men. In the words of General Hershey, 'There is no question but that women could do a lot of things in the military service. So could men in wheelchairs. But you couldn't expect the services to want a whole company of people in wheelchairs'[p. 57]."

### 3. Regimentation and Discipline

Reactions and adjustment to military regimentation and discipline differ between men and women. For men, there is usually more exposure to structured group activities and group living during childhood or adolescence than there is



for women. Men are more apt to be involved in scouting, team sports, etc., than women. As pointed out by Elliott [1960], "many women have never experienced group living . . . [p. 1]." Because of this, the problems servicewomen encounter adjusting to group living, regimentation, and other trying aspects of military life are probably more acute than those experienced by men [Coates and Pellegrin, 1965].





## X. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. CONCLUSIONS

There is no simple solution to the problems of adjustment encountered by new recruits entering the military services. Although there has been considerable research done in the areas of recruit training and the changing values, motivations and life-styles of today's youth, recruit training environments remain relatively unchanged; and trainers continue to operate with little thought or understanding of the difficulty of adjustment encountered by recruits entering the military. Most trainers have no knowledge of the above mentioned research, and receive no formal education in individual/group behavior and the psychology of adjustment.

Obviously, there is a need for recruit training command staff personnel to be made aware/more aware of the changing values and needs of the youth of today, the difficulty of their adjustment from civilian to military life, and of the research done in this area; and for recruit training commands themselves, to be continually examined and evaluated in the areas of recruit standards/requirements and service requirements after training, with a view toward making the organization more "realistic" and "humanistic."



## B. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Training methods should be examined in light of the changing values, needs, motivations, and levels of education and maturity of today's youth.

2. There should continue to be a movement away from harshly imposed punishments and physical/psychological harassment, and a wider use of positive incentives.

3. There should be a concerted effort among recruit trainers to lessen the "culture shock" during the first twenty-four hours or so of recruit training.

4. Demands made of recruits should be great enough to present a challenge and screen out those recruits that are emotionally and physically unsuited for military service, but should not be excessive or unrealistic.

5. Only the most qualified, high caliber personnel should be selected for company commander positions. They should be experienced, mature, emotionally stable, people-oriented, and possess a positive attitude toward their duty and the service.

6. Company commanders should undergo a thorough training program that should include not only the duties and responsibilities of a company commander, but also leadership and individual/group behavior. They should also be made aware of the research that has been done or is being done in the area of military recruit training.

7. Recruiters should investigate a potential recruit's background more thoroughly, particularly their school and work histories.



8. Recruiters should provide accurate information, and avoid overselling their products.

9. Feedback between recruit training commands and recruiting commands should be improved and expedited.



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